

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TRIESTE 0027

E.O. : 11652: GDS

TAGS : PINT, IT

SUBJ : NORTHEAST'S REACTION TO MORE POWERS FOR
THE REGIONS

1. SUMMARY. REACTIONS OF THE TWO REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS IN
THE NORTHEAST TO THE PROSPECT OF GREATER POWERS UNDER LAW 382
RANGE FROM A NEAR DO-NOTHING ATTITUDE BY FRIULI TO A SOMEWHAT
MORE VIGOROUS BUT LIMITED RESPONSE IN THE VENETO. REASON FOR
THE LETHARGY IS CLEAR: LACK OF MANPOWER AND OTHER RESOURCES.
MOREOVER, THE REGIONS ARE RELUCTANT TO COMMIT SCARCE RESOURCES
TO WHAT CAN ONLY BE CONSIDERED A QUESTIONABLE OPPORTUNITY IN
THE SHORT-RUN--THE ONLY TIME FRAME THAT MAKES SENSE TO AN
ITALIAN POLITICIAN. ALSO THE MOST IMPORTANT POWERES REMAIN IN
ROME AND IT IS THE CHAFF THAT HAS BEEN WINNOWNED FOR THE

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PROVINCES. MOREOVER FRIULI IS SEIZED OF THE EARTHQUAKE AND
HAS LITTLE TIME OR ENERGY FOR ANYTHING ELSE, PARTICULARLY
WITH REGIONAL ELECTIONS DUE THIS SPRING. ONE MAN--ALBEIT A
GOOD ONE--HAS BEEN ASSIGNED TO 'KEEP AN EYE ON 382' FOR THE
FRIULI (AND THE DC). AS FOR THE VENETO IT CAME OFF THE MARK
FAST, SEEKING TO USE LAW 382 TO CARVE OUT AN EARLY ROLE FOR
ITSELF AS THE COORDINATOR OF INTER-REGIONAL MATTERS BOTH AT
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HOME AND WITH THE BORDERING REGIONS OF ITALY'S NEIGHBORS;
THAT LATTER FREE WHEELING HAS CAUGHT ROME'S EYE HOWEVER AND
THE FARNESINA WOULD LIKE TO DUMP BUCKETS OF COLD WATER ON ANY
EMERGING NOTION OF A FOREIGN POLICY FOR THE SERENISSIMA IN
THE 20TH CENTURY. AS ENVISAGED, REGIONALISM MAY JUST BE THE
THING TO HELP STRENGTHEN ITALIAN DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS (VIA
LOCAL ALLEGINANCES, ETC.) BUT TIME AND MONEY MAY BE IN TOO

SHORT A SUPPLY. END SUMMARY.

2. FRIULI-VENEZIA GIULIA. WHILE THE PROSPECT OF ENHANCED POWERS FOR THE REGION HAS NOT GENERATED EXACTLY A HO-HUM RESPONSE IN FRIULI, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE REGION ALREADY HAS ITS HANDS FULL WITH THE EARTHQUAKE AND IS NOT IN A POSITION TO TAKE ON ANY ADDITIONAL LOADS. FOR THAT REASON, FRANCO

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RICHETTI, CHIEF POLITICAL ADVISOR/AIDE TO REGIONAL PRESIDENT COMELLI (DC) HAS BEEN CHARGED WITH 'KEEPING AN EYE ON THINGS' WHICH HE DOES IN ADDITION TO OTHER TROUBLE SHOOTING ROLES AND HIS JOB AS DC FLOOR LEADER IN THE CITY COUNCIL. ASKED WHAT WAS BEING DONE ABOUT 382, RICHETTI INDICATED THAT HE WAS NOT DOING MUCH AT ALL. MOREOVER, PREPARATION FOR THE SPRING REGIONAL ELECTIONS HERE (MAY OR JUNE 1978) TOGETHER WITH EVERYTHING ELSE LEAVE NO TIME FOR NEW RESPONSIBILITIES. IN FACT, LAW 382, RICHETTI SUGGESTED, HAS BROUGHT MANY PROBLEMS WITH IT. CERTAIN NATIONAL ENTITIES WHICH PROVIDED VARIOUS SERVICES IN THE EARTHQUAKE ZONE ARE NOW TO BE DISSOLVED AND THE REGION MUST TAKE OVER WITH NO ADDITIONAL FINANCING. THUS DESPITE THE PROFOUND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF EVEN A LIMITED TRANSFER OF POWERS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, SUCH A MOVE IS LOOKED UPON FAR MORE AS A BURDEN THAN AS AN OPPORTUNITY.

3. VENETO. TO THE SOUTH THERE HAS BEEN MORE MOVEMENT AS CONFIDENTIAL

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THE ENERGETIC EMERGING NEXT GENERATION DC LEADERS (AS WELL AS PART OF THE OLD GUARD) SEEM TO HAVE UNDERSTOOD THAT 382 WHILE OBVIOUSLY A MIXED BLESSING OFFERS SOME UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES AS WELL. FIRST, THE VENETO TOOK THE INITIATIVE

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(INITIALLY FRIULI WAS NOT EVEN INVITED TO JOIN) TO ORGANIZE DISCUSSIONS AMONG BORDERING REGIONS OF NEIGHBOR STATES... THE SO-CALLED ALPINE ARC: VENETO, TRENTINO-ALTO ADIGE IN ITALY; CARINTHIA IN AUSTRIA, SLOVENIA AND CROATIA IN YUGOSLAVIA AND FOR GOOD MEASURE BAVARIA IN WEST GERMANY. THE OSTENSIBLE SCOPE WAS TO FOCUS ON SUCH COMMON CONCERNS AS ECOLOGY, TRANSPORT, PORTS, ETC. A WORKING GROUP WAS ESTABLISHED WHICH MET IN GRAZ LATE LAST YEAR TO DRAFT A SET OF PRINCIPLES. REGIONAL PRESIDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO GATHER IN VENICE IN APRIL OR SO TO PUT THEIR BLESSING TO IT.

4. THE ALPINE ARC SCHEME FOR EXAMPLE ALSO SERVES AS BASIS FOR PERIODIC MEETINGS, CONSULTATIONS, ETC. BETWEEN THE DOROTEI VENETO CORRENTE AND THE CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTIES NORTH OF THE ALPS--A POINT NOT LOST ON

ROME. IN VIEW OF THE CONSERVATIVE CAST TO THE ORGANIZATION,
FOR EXAMPLE, FRIULI WITH ITS DOMINANT MOROTEI AND FORZE
NUOVE CORRENTI WAS NOT ASKED INITIALLY TO JOIN THE UNDERTAKING.
5. ROME HAS APPARENTLY AWAKENED TO WHAT IS GOING ON AND SOME
POINTED QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN RAISED BY THE FARNESINA ABOUT THE
ROLE OF THE REGIONS IN THE CONDUCT OF FOREIGN RELATIONS.

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VENETO LEADERS HAVE TENDED TO DOWN PLAY THE CONTRETEMPS WITH
THE FARNESINA BUT APPRAENTLY ROME HAS LITTLE PATIENCE WITH
THE ARC PLAN. MOEN.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TRIESTE 27

E.O. : 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJ: NORTHEAST'S REACTION TO MORE POWERS FOR THE
REGIONS

6. THE ONLY SERIOUS STUDY WE HAVE SEEN OF THE PRACTICAL
IMPLCATIONS OF LAW 382 HAS BEEN DONE BY THE REGIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF VENETO INDUSTRIALISTS. LEADING VENETO
INDUSTRIALISTS HAVE DESCRIBED THE REPORT TO US AN AN
IMPORTANT ONE AND PERUSAL OF ITS SUPPORTS THAT JUDGEMENT
IN OUR VIEW. WHILE FAR SHORT OF A COMPLETE PRODUCT, THE
STUDY GOES A LONG WAY IN OUTLINING WHICH POWERS GO WHERE
AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF EACH MOVE FOR INDUSTRY AND LOCAL
GOVERNMENTS.

7 ALSO THE VENETO HAS TAKEN THE LEAD IN SEEKING EARLY

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COOPERATION AMONG ALL ITALIAN REGIONS. TO THIS END, IT ORGANIZED A TWO-DAY CONFERENCE (JANUARY 9-10) OF REGIONAL BUDGET ASSESSORS WHICH WAS ATTENDED BY REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE 20 REGIONS, GUIDO FANTI, PRESIDENT, CHAMBER REGINAL COMMITTEE, BUDGET MINISTRY DIRECTOR GARIELE, AND BUDGET MINISTER MORLINO. VENETO VICE PRESIDENT MARINO CORTESE (DC-FORZE NUOVE) CHAIRED THE MEETING WHICH FOCUSED ON SUCH CONFIDENTIAL

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BASIC QUESTIONS AS (A) INSTITUTIONAL AND ORGANIZATION ASPECTS OF REGIONALISM, (B) LONG-TERM PLANNING AND PROBLEMS OF COORDINATING LOCAL FINANCING, (C) PROBLEMS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND (D) TERRITORIAL ASPECTS OF REGIONAL PROGRAMS.

8. AFTER TWO DAYS OF DISCUSSIONS, AN AGREED DOCUMENT WAS ISSUED ON THE NEED FOR COOPERATION ETC. AMONG ALL CONCERNED. A CONCRETE RESULT WAS THE AGREEMENT TO ESTABLISH A COMMITTEE TO (A) APPRAISE AT THE TECHNICAL-JURIDICAL LEVEL THE PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH CENTRAL GOVERNMENT-REGION RELATIONS, AND (B) ENSURE COORDINATION AND SHARING OF INFORMATION AMONG THE REGIONS AND MINISTERIES, ETC.

9. COMMENT. THE SORTING-OUT PROCESS OF THE ASSIGNMENT OF SOME LIMITED ADDITIONAL POWERS TO THE REGIONS CONTINUES BUT THE EMERGING PATTERN SUGGESTS THAT ROME WILL JEALOUSLY GUARD

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ITS MOST IMPORTANT PREROGATIVES AND MAINTAIN A TIGHT REIN OF PATRONAGE. WITH NO EFFECTIVE INCREASE IN THEIR RESOURCES, THE REGIONS ARE NOT EQUIPPED TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE SITUATION AND THERE ARE THE EARMARKS OF A LOST OPPORTUNITY IN THE MAKING. IN THIS PERIOD OF MOUNTING TENSIONS IN THE COUNTRY AND THE INCREASED DISAFFECTION OF MANY ITALIANS, REGIONALISM IS ONE MEANS TO HELP BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN CITIZEN AND STATE BY REINFORCING LOCAL ALLEGIANCES AND BRINGING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THINGS AND PEOPLE CLOSER TO HOME UNDER LOCAL JURISDICTION. AND OUR EFFORTS ALONG THE LINES OF THE NAPLES CONFERENCE ON REGIONALISM LATER THIS MONTH IS THE KIND OF COLLATERAL SUPPORT HELPFUL TO THE STRENGTHENING OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AT THE GRASS ROOTS LEVEL. SIGNIFICANTLY, BOTH RICHETTI AND CORTESE--THE TWO KEY MEN IN THE NORTHEAST--WILL BE RE-CONFIDENTIAL

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PRESENTING THEIR REGIONS AT THE CONFERENCE. MOEN.

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